



By Tom Kelley, Staff Photographer

CIRCUS FAN—Chester Cooper, 7514 Vale st., Chevy Chase, with model circus he built and set up in his garage.

It's a 3-Ring Circus

White House Worker's Hobby Is Modeled Atop Table

CPYRGHT By Richard Corrigan
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Chester L. Cooper, 49, works for the Government. In the White House. On the National Security Council.

He works hard. And he worries.

About Vietnam. Before Vietnam, about Cuban missiles. Before the missiles, about Suez. And other things. There are always other things to worry about.

"I usually get home late," he said the other night. He wasn't complaining, but explaining. "And then by the time I have a drink and dinner, I'm too tired to read, so I come down here for a while."

Here is the cinderblock garage of the handsome Cooper home in Chevy Chase. And in the garage, shimmering from the top of a ping-pong table, is a circus.

Technically speaking, it is a model circus. Scale, one inch to three feet. Items, a few thousand clay figures, and hundreds of other things

made of bits and pieces of bottles and reels and feathers and strings.

Sweet Cotton Candy

But squint your eyes at it and this is no model at all.

It draws you in and it takes you back, until all else is unreal, and you are in the midst of razzle-dazzle barkers and sweet cotton candy, and the roaring and stamping of fear-somely fanged animals, and the enticing evils of a girly show, and the exultant flights of trapeze artists, and the whole run - away-from-home call of a world that came in on wagon-wheels and made everything else look stale when it went away.

"Actually, if I may say so, some of the animals really are quite good," said Cooper, chuckling. He doesn't like to seem too serious about the thing. "That's not a bad hippopotamus," he said, pointing his pipe at it. "There's some good gorilla."

lion took a whole Sunday afternoon."

A long-time amateur sculptor, Cooper said he took up circuses just because they are fun to work with—there is action, and color, and odd things to make. No, he said, he hasn't been to a circus for several years and doesn't know any circus people, although in making the model he did visit a few circus museums and the National Zoo. Generally, he said, "it represents what I would do if I were running a circus instead of—something else."

This is his third and biggest circus and he started it 2½ years ago. The first was built during Suez and the second, which has been donated to the children at the National Institutes of Health, during the Cuban crisis.

He plans to give this one to

Children's Hospital here, he said, if the people there want it and have room. He built it in sections, which can be lifted from the table without upsetting all the parades and side-shows and behind-the-scene and main-tent attractions going on.

"Basically," he said of a circus, "I think it brings — or at least it used to bring — a hell of a lot of excitement to people." Another chuckle. "And it is kind of exciting."

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